

## Carol Coles

---

**From:** Carol Coles  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 23, 2010 2:22 PM  
**To:** \*everyone; \_Council Members; Andy Rieger; Denise Holder; Eddie Sims; Jane Cannon; KGOU; KOCO; KOKH; Ktok; KTOK; Norman News; Oklahoma Daily  
**Subject:** City Announces Changes to Solid Waste Collection Events and Services

City of Norman  
201 West Gray  
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Carol Coles  
City Of Norman  
366-5404  
[carol.coles@normanok.gov](mailto:carol.coles@normanok.gov)

The Norman City Council provided direction to the City Staff at its annual planning and budget work session to help secure the Sanitation Fund's finances after the recent failed rate request. "We took detailed information to the voters about the City's Sanitation Rates", said Mayor Cindy Rosenthal. "More importantly, when the voters spoke, we listened. The Council is taking citizen input to heart and has begun the work to immediately identify short and long-term solutions. We believe that the voters spoke very clearly about their desire to see us live within our current revenues during these tough economic times and we share their concerns."

The Sanitation and Water Divisions do not receive monies from the General Fund or from taxes. The revenues for these Utilities are generated from their customers. The Council has directed the City Manager and staff to take belt-tightening steps within the Divisions which preserve all required services while finding savings where possible. Consequently, in the short term, the City can not maintain the current level of citizen services offered in sanitation on existing revenues. In the long-run, the City will have to postpone some water infrastructure investments.

The Spring and Fall Clean Up events, while popular with many customers, are a costly event and do not directly effect the basic residential and commercial sanitation service. In an effort to reduce costs, the 2011 Spring Clean Up event will be cancelled, saving the division about \$130,000 in overtime and disposal costs. The Fall Clean Up 2010 event will continue as scheduled (each Saturday from Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> to Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>).

Additionally, this winter, the frequency of Yard Waste Collection is being considered for reduction. Formal policy changes will be presented to the City Council immediately. For the winter months of December, January and February, yard waste will be collected once per month rather than the current schedule of once per week. This will coincide with a normal reduced usage for yard waste pick up in the winter. A significant portion of yard waste collection labor is done with temporary employees, so reducing collections to once per month will not require laying off full time Sanitation employees. The reduction to once per month collections will be a savings of thousands of dollars each month in reduced fuel, maintenance and temporary labor. The Compost facility located at 398 Bratcher Miner Road, will

remain open for normal winter hours so customers may continue to bring their own materials to the center if needed.

“We are making hard decisions, but necessary decisions”, said Rosenthal. “Our primary job is to provide quality core services to the citizens of Norman. The balance is to not jeopardize projects that help Norman continue to grow and provide the quality of life we all have come to enjoy.”

Next month the City Council will be reviewing an independent performance audit of the current Municipal Solid Waste Collection System to ensure the service is meeting the demands of the customers in an efficient and effective manner.

As a part of the review of the Sanitation Fund, the City Council left unchanged other services such as, the three recycling centers will continue to be open and operational. In addition, the spring time Household Hazardous Waste Event will continue to be held providing customers the opportunity to dispose of hazardous waste in a safe and environmental manner. “Council remains committed to providing environmentally significant services to our citizens and offering options for recycling that are not available to citizens through curbside recycling,” Rosenthal emphasized.